



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2015  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Tuesday, June 2, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina . The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 1:22 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, and The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan. The Honorable Moe Baddourah arrived at 2:10 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. *The minutes are numbered to coincide with the order of the meeting.*

### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION**

1. [General Fund and Contingency Fund Balances](#) – Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager for Economic and Financial Services/Chief Financial Officer and Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director recalled that on April 21, 2015 staff requested an allocation for repairs to the Drew Wellness Center pool. She reported that the General Fund balance through June 30, 2014 was at \$25 million, which was unallocated; allocations were made during last year's budget cycle for general capital projects in a total amount of \$4.7 million; and additional allocations were made during the year for capital projects, which left a balance of \$17.2 million. She continued to report that the 15% reserve fund of \$16.6 million left a balance of \$601,000, which was requested as an allocation for repairs needed at the Drew Wellness Center pool. She reminded Council of the \$65,000 in Council contingency funds and the \$108,000 in budgeted reserves.

Councilor Devine said it would be helpful to be more objective, look at the timeframe for projects and determine if there are liability issues surrounding the requests.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the pool at the Wellness Center has to be done. She said we can determine some of the priorities from a staff perspective, but we will need direction from City Council on the other projects.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director noted that the General Fund CIP is a list of capital improvement requests for the next five (5) years to include our city buildings, streets, park facilities and other facilities. She said that these projects have been prioritized by departments, but funding hasn't been identified. She recalled that during last year, the prior year audited fund balance was allocated towards the 2014/2015 capital projects.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that Council approach this by creating a contingency funding list based on surpluses. He said Council will know more about surplus funding in the third or fourth quarter. He said we should articulate non-recurring items that can be funded until surplus funds are exhausted after the 15% reserve fund requirement is met. He said there are some requests that aren't very large like Ms. Plaugh's proposed neighborhood master plans and Ms. Devine's Domestic Violence Walk and Youth Violence Prevention Week.

Councilor Devine asked why Roy Lynch Park is on the list of Council requested projects instead of the capital projects list. She said that the Richland One STEM Project should come out of the balance from the Together We Can Read initiative.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there is funding in the current budget proposal for the Planning and Development Services Department to move forward with the neighborhood master plan.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director agreed that there is \$50,000 in the 2015/2016 budget for neighborhood plans, but \$100,000 would cover four (4) plans instead of two (2).

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager suggested that Council work with staff to determine which of the current plans should be implemented before starting another plan.

There was a consensus of Council to request a narrative along with concerns associated with each general capital project and Council will provide feedback to the City Manager prior to the June 16, 2015 meeting.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about the outstanding commitments for Bull Street. She asked if we are covered for the upcoming year.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said yes, in anticipation of requests we've included amounts to get us started in the proposed budget.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about the Bull Street park development.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager for Economic and Financial Services/Chief Financial Officer explained that we will identify with Mr. Hughes what we think will be done over the next year. He recalled that over a year ago the City's outside counsel provided different ways to fund Bull Street and we were looking more at Installment Purchase Revenue Bonds and funding parts of the project with cash. He said that a phased in schedule was provided in the Development Agreement. He agreed to include those items in next week's discussion as well.

Councilor Davis asked if we have an anticipated start date for various components of the park. He requested periodic updates.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations noted that Exhibit C in the Development Agreement laid that out and staff has requested an update.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director asked if there were additional questions related to the allocation for repairs needed at the Drew Wellness Center.

Councilor Plough said it's going to be approximately \$950,000 to make these improvements and \$380,000 will come out of funds set aside for roofing.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said staff is proposing that the project for our fleet services facility would be deferred this year and this would allow us to use those funds for the Drew Wellness Center.

Councilor Davis asked about the timeline on the roof for the Keenan House.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said the design has been done and it's ready to go out to bid. He added that all of the design work has been done on pending roof replacement projects. He noted that half of the list has been completed. He said we are moving funding from the current year's allocation to the Drew Wellness Center and we are postponing the roof replacement at Fleet Services until after July 1, 2015.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to allocate \$601,150.00 from the General Fund fund balance to the Charles R. Drew Wellness Center pool repairs with the caveat the project is started immediately.

Councilor Devine asked about the lift at Arsenal Hill.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager said that the lift is already funded and the project is in the bid process.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked Council to notify her of any amendments to the project list.

Councilor Devine expressed concerns about the requested by comments for the Columbia Housing Authority project. In light of other comments, she doesn't want it to appear as if only the black people care about that project. She said it was a unanimous vote of a previous Council to send a letter in support of that project; we need to be mindful of the way things are disseminated in the public.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that the Columbia Housing Authority request predates this seated Council. She asked Council to consider dates for a proposed retreat along with the January 2016 meeting schedule.

There was a consensus of Council to schedule a City Council Retreat for January 14-16, 2016 and to reserve the normal meeting schedule for January 2016 at this juncture.

- **Council recessed at 2:00 p.m.**
  - **Mr. Baddourah joined the meeting at 2:10 p.m.**
  - **Council reconvened at 2:17 p.m.**
2. [Columbia Urban League's Funding Request for the 2015 Summer Work Experience Leadership Program](#) – Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager recalled that the Summer Work Experience Leadership Program and our partnership with the Columbia Urban League were presented to Council on May 19, 2015 along with a request for funding. He reported that the City of Columbia has fifty (50) worksites and job descriptions have been identified for the program.

Mr. J.T. McLawhorn, President of the Columbia Urban League thanked Council for being proactive in moving toward a prevention model. He said that research has been very clear that prevention is more cost effective than punishment. He said this summer work experience program and the partnerships with the City of Columbia Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department is not only a youth empowerment effort, but a public safety initiative, too. He said that young adults between the ages of 17 and 25 make up a tremendous portion of our prison population. He said if we can invest on the front end, it will help this community to become a healthier community.

Mayor Benjamin said the more money we spend on our youth is a sound investment that saves us a great deal of money, time and pain in the future. He said we want to employ 1,000 youth at a total request of \$389,000. He proposed that Council appropriate \$225,000 from the detention center budget for fiscal year 2015/2016 to go towards SWELP and allocate the balance of funding from the contingency and/or reserve funds. He said he is okay with supporting the Urban League at \$270,000 and the Junior League at \$126,000.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that the total budget for the detention center is \$450,000.00.

Councilor Devine asked how much has been spent out of the detention center budget during 2014/2015.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said \$400,000 through April 2015.

Councilor Devine said in years past Council discussed whether or not the folks that are spending the night in jail are people that should be there. She said if we are going to cut that money, we will need to be proactive in figuring out how to keep people from staying the night in jail as much.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that takes us back to the proposal from the magistrate.

Councilor Devine said that Jeff Caton has met with the Junior League and they have value engineered phase one. She said the request is now \$125,000 and we need to fund that amount. She noted that the \$100,000 raised by the Junior League may not be there if we can't figure out way to fund them. She expressed her displeasure with the way communications have gone; if we have a private partner at the table with \$100,000 for something that needs to be done then we need to figure out how to do it.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department explained that \$83,000 has been raised by the Junior League and there is \$70,000 pending in grant requests.

Councilor Davis said he supports partnering with the Columbia Urban League, because it's an economic impact that helps young people build work skills. He said this is a model. He asked Mr. McLawhorn to look at the statistics at the conclusion of the program. He added that the partnership to upgrade Roy Lynch Park has preventive measures that help with the crime issues the neighborhood has experienced.

Councilor Baddourah sought clarification on the Mayor's proposal. He said they were in a committee meeting where they were asked about reducing funding for the detention center and they all agreed to not decrease the funding for the jail when it comes to keeping criminals in jail. He noted that this is the only concern he has with this discussion.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that we would establish a list of prioritized funding requests that will be funded by the budget surplus this fall. He said we won't go into the third and fourth quarters without funding for the detention center. He noted that the issue of jails and prisoner drop off is very important to him as well.

Councilor Devine didn't recall the discussion on decreasing funding for the jail. She said by decreasing this budget we are not limiting arrests. She said we pay \$25 per day per prisoner and we are billed at the end of the year. She doesn't support allowing convicted people to be out on the street, but we need to be preventive. She asked how many juveniles we are incarcerating.

Mayor Benjamin said 7,699 people were arrested in 2013 and 2,792 of those people were age 25 and under.

Councilor Newman said he has interacted with students in the program and this is something that many neighborhoods request, because they want us to have positive engagement on the front end opposed to prepping for people to be arrested. He is glad to support the funding and he is not supporting letting criminals out on the street. He clarified that there is a difference between our funding for the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center for those with simple municipal charges as opposed to folks going to the

Department of Corrections, which we don't contribute to financially; we are not letting hard core criminals out.

Councilor Plaugh said the Mayor's challenge to increase the number to 1,000 is significant for this community and she is prepared to support this.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to appropriate \$225,000 from the 2015/2016 budget from the detention center allotment, \$22,500 from the Council contingency fund and \$22,500 from the reserve fund for a total amount of \$270,000. This effort is to be proclaimed and highly publicized along with the opportunity for citizens to contribute through their water bills.

3. [Roy Lynch Park Phase I Design](#) – Ms. Mandy Wren, Junior League of Columbia Board Manager

Councilor Devine explained that there is a lot of momentum and excitement behind this with the expectation that the park would be ready by August. She said the project has been value engineered and phased with phase one costing the most. She said that the Junior League has raised substantial funding and they continue to fund raise. She said this is a unique partnership for a capital improvement to a city asset.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager sought clarity on the timing and expectations for this project.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said one of the challenges they face is the City's procurement process; once that's complete there's a timeline for ordering equipment and installing it. He estimated that this could be done within 12 to 14 weeks. He suggested that using the Junior League's funding to purchase the equipment could speed the process up.

Councilor Davis recalled that there were significant negative issues with the park and this project would add to the quality of life for the neighborhood; a busy park is a safe park.

Ms. Plaugh added an amendment to adopt a policy that would allow Council to elevate its priorities where there is a public private partnership with a significant match for public improvements. She said we need to understand the maintenance responsibilities, too.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager suggested that a memorandum of understanding be drafted.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to allocate \$75,000 from the reserve fund and \$50,000 from the Council contingency fund for a total allocation of \$125,000.00 for phase one of Roy Lynch Park. Council will adopt a policy allowing for the elevation of its priorities where there is a public private partnership with a significant match for public improvements. Mr. Runyan was not present for the vote.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager clarified that the park will not be ready when school starts.

Ms. Pamela Adams, Richland One Board of School Commissioner explained that traditionally Logan Elementary used Roy Lynch Park as their playground, but Logan is getting an inside playground this summer.

4. Main Street and [Vista Yellow Shirts Program](#) – Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership and Mr. Richard Burts, President of the Congaree Vista Guild

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership thanked Council for supporting the connected yellow shirt ambassador program. He explained that the City Center Partnership has been providing ambassador services for fourteen years in the core of downtown and the program was expanded into the Vista in September 2014. He said that the program has gone exceedingly well.

Mr. Richard Burts, President of the Congaree Vista Guild said this has been an amazing collaboration with the City Center Partnership and it's a good supplement to City services. He requested \$225,000 for the program in 2015/2016, which maintains the current level of services. He noted that City Council allocated \$150,000 last year. He added that consistent funding is very important.

Mayor Benjamin said he fully supports this request.

Councilor Devine asked that staff look at the Hospitality and Accommodations Tax budgets.

Councilor Davis asked how many positions are funded.

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership said it translates into six (6) people; it is based on man hours and that can be adjusted as needed.

Mayor Benjamin asked staff to review projections for 2015/2016; committee allocations; and unused allocations from this year. This request will be considered on June 16, 2015.

Councilor Runyan inquired about current year collections.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager for Economic and Financial Services/Chief Financial Officer said we are on target for projections for this year and we anticipate the same for next year.

5. Columbia Police Department Citizens Advisory Committee - The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan

Councilor Runyan said he asked these three gentlemen to address Council today and continue the dialog that was started on the Citizens Advisory Committee we recently constituted in the City. He recalled that there was a discussion about the involvement of a large group of pastors in the City of which these men are representatives of and the role they played in helping to establish this committee. He asked these gentlemen to share their historical involvement and how other bodies that have established similar committees have addressed the organizations that helped begin these committees.

Bishop Eric Davis said they appreciate the fact that the advisory council that they strongly suggested that the City adopt was passed, but they are one step short. He said this advisory council was modeled after the Sheriff's Department's council, which was proposed by the NAACP and as a result the Sheriff has memorialized a seat for the NAACP. He said they advocated for the same thing for several reasons and from a historical standpoint, this issue was essentially dead. He said with Ferguson and other recent events happening around the nation, a broad group of ministers met and discovered that they have splinter groups and at times, splinter information. He said people make decisions and move as a result of not having full knowledge of what's going on. He said having the experience of sitting on the board he knew that it was the most effective way to disseminate information. He said that the organization is comprised of 80,000 to 100,000 people. He explained that his group formed an umbrella group that is now named the Carolina Christian Leadership Alliance, which is comprised of the major denominations in the state. He said they solicited SLED and the Governor has given a nod to replicate the board for the Law Enforcement Division. He said that the Department of Public Safety has given them seven (7) seats and the City just approved it. He said we need to memorialize it for our group for several reasons. He said there could come a day where we don't have this Council present and we'd like the same respect and understanding of why we pushed for this. He said we may not be in leadership at that point and it needs to continue. He said another reason is that our group is a called coalition; we're not like some of the local bodies that meet every month, we convene around issues. He said this was the central issue that brought this group together. He acknowledged that there were peripheral issues that they addressed. He said we have to have specific delegates that come back to our direct body so that we disseminate the information to all the other religious bodies that are connected to us. He said the body needs to recommend the individuals for the seat to be approved by the Council and they are not going to put sitting pastors on that board, because we need someone who is going to be present, ascertain the information and convey it back to the at-large group. His opinion is that they fought hard and not long ago the Sheriff himself didn't think this could pass. He noted that the at-large group convened last week and voted unanimously on having this seat memorialized.



Mayor Benjamin said he feels strongly that all members of this committee should be appointed by City Council. He said with the delicate nature of the issues discussed and the delicate nature of the issues nationally, it needs to be representative of the collective view of the members of this Council who are charged with the administration of justice in this City. He said this is not a slight against the Alliance. He said as a former youth leader in the NAACP, he would not have supported the NAACP having a posted position. He recalled that he served on the Columbia Urban League's board when Chad Jones was killed years ago and they were advocating at that time for a council of sorts as well, but that did not happen. He said he would not support the Urban League to sit on this board. He said we have several organizations in this room that are advocating before this Council on a regular basis. He insisted that the Council needs to own responsibility for every appointment that we make and judiciously decide who serves there.

Councilor Runyan said given the role that this very broad coalition played in bringing this to fruition, bringing it to the Council's attention and pushing it as articulated weeks ago, we should memorialize a seat for them. He suggested adding an eleventh seat to the ten member commission and that we receive a nominee from the alliance that City Council would vote on. He said it is important that we not lose sight of the events that have happened in other communities; we must have the ability to communicate from the Police Department into the community rapidly and efficiently.

Mr. Runyan made a motion to add an eleventh seat to the ten member committee and that eleventh seat would be memorialized for the Carolina Christian Leadership Alliance allowing them to put forth a nominee from their group that would be affirmed by this Council.

Councilor Plough said when they discussed this as a Council, one thought was that each Council member might bring forth an appointment, but the decision of this body was that we didn't want individual Council members bringing forth names of individuals and that we would advertise it and make a decision as a group. She said the recommendation coming from Mr. Runyan isn't unusual in nature. She said the Art Museum makes recommendations for their own board, but this is a different kind of entity that we are setting up. She noted that the first time she heard about the desire to have such a group was from the Bishop. She said based on the genesis of this she will second the motion.

Councilor Devine recalled that this was a part of the press conference Chief had after his appointment. She said the first time she heard it was from our Police Chief.

Councilor Baddourah said without knowing the history, but after listening to this, he likes the idea, because the group has bridged the gap between Richland County and the Police Department by communicating whatever issues they have. He said if we have a riot, no one will understand where the city line or the county line is. He likes the idea of having someone to connect the bridge or close the gap between County discussions and plans. Even though he's sure there are a lot of discussions between our Chief and Leon Lott he thinks it's a good idea.

Bishop Eric Davis said they have members on every board. He noted that he has a church in Baltimore and during the week of the riot, he met with the pastors in Baltimore. He said they were spinning their wheels, because there was disconnect between the police department and the community and the church had no way of conveying any information. He said as the pastors were meeting there was still a riot going on outside, because they could not convey any real information to their parishioners or the community. He said we are creating a system where we would become an ally for the City so that in the event that something like that happens, we can directly disseminate to heads of organizations that can disseminate to a hundred thousand people quickly.

Councilor Devine told Bishop Davis that she listens to him on Sunday mornings and she heard him state that the last time he was here he never got so much anger from a group of people. She doesn't think this Council is angry; we are just asking questions. She hopes that her question will be taken in the manner that it is stated. She hopes that through our Police Department and Public Relations Department, we can certainly disseminate information. She asked Bishop Davis if the only way to disseminate information is through the black church and if so do you feel like we need the white churches represented.

Bishop Eric Davis said we are not precluding anybody from being on the board.

Councilor Devine requested an example of an event and this coalition's role.

Bishop Eric Davis said he has a 5,000 member church in the Broad River corridor. He said when there was a shooting on Broad River Road he was called immediately and there was an information network that went forth at their church, because they have a 150-member evangelistic team that hits every part of that demographic on a weekly basis. He said there wasn't a church presence in Baltimore or Ferguson; they tried to get ahead of it, but it was too late. He said part of the reason was that they had improper information about what happened. He said by virtue of the advisory board, they would have proper information disseminated without listening to the media.

Councilor Devine sought an explanation on the logistics. She asked how that information would be disseminated and how does that solve the issues.

Bishop Eric Davis said when there is a shooting in Richland County they have an immediate called meeting for the advisory board. He said as internal affairs begin looking at the incident Richland County has a called meeting of the advisory board. He said that board reviews the facts of the shooting and that delegate would have the ability to disseminate that information to the broader group as opposed to pastors having to hear it from the news; tempers are beginning to boil and you are trying to get ahead of something; this puts us in a position to have knowledge and to make recommendations by virtue of the delegate that we put there. He said the delegate has the interest of the coalition and they can speak directly to the situation on both sides of it. He said this gives us the ability to not run with rhetoric.

Mayor Benjamin said he was under the impression that the Sheriff made all of the appointments to his council.

Bishop Eric Davis said there is a memorialized seat for the NAACP so he does make the appointments.

Mayor Benjamin asked if there is a seat for the Alliance.

Bishop Eric Davis said he will; SLED does now.

Mayor Benjamin said nothing prohibits the Alliance and any other group in the City from making recommendations. He told Ms. Plough that this Council retains the right to appoint who we want to the Museum of Art. He said he can't think of one item that's more sensitive before the American public now and that's something we need to own. He said individual members of Council shouldn't have the ability to make one appointment, because one disruptive force can destroy this entire council. He said the work that's being done at the Police Department is phenomenal; they are leading this country on issues of accountability and transparency that we are not seeing anywhere in the States, let alone across this county. He insisted that we cannot disrupt that work; it's so important that we retain the responsibility for appointing folks to this council. He asked to see a membership list for the Alliance. He acknowledged that he's had several conversations with Bishop Davis both face to face and via electronic communications. He said with the incredibly sensitive work that the City has to do to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have to make sure we are being as inclusive as possible. He said the names he plans to submit to this Council for their collective decision will be men and women of the cloth, but they may or may not be members of the Alliance. He said we have invested \$12 to \$13 million more dollars in our Police Department; the City Manager has led the charge in hiring a top flight Police Chief; he has a great command staff in place; and the Internal Affairs Report we released weeks ago is unlike anything I've seen across this country in terms of transparency and accountability. He said he appreciates the advocacy from members of the Alliance; this council is another move in the right direction. He said we cannot lose our momentum and it would be a mistake for any other outside group to retain the right to appoint members here; we need to ask everyone to submit names for nomination and this Council needs to take responsibility to make those decisions.

Bishop Eric Davis said Council will still have the right to approve the nomination that we select from within our larger group. He suggested that Council appoint individuals that can understand the information that is being disseminated. He said they will find the best person to parse out issues and bring the correct information back to the board. He asked the Mayor if we would be here with an advisory board had the Alliance not brought this forward. He said no one had put that on the table.

Mayor Benjamin said we were fighting about the Human Rights Commission and Mr. Runyan put this on the table as an alternative to the Human Rights Commission. He said we could have had one sooner. He hopes to have members of the Alliance on the board; nothing stops any citizen from applying; nothing stops the Alliance from endorsing folks for membership, but the decision as to who serves ought to reside with the people and their elected representatives. He said these issues are delicate and we dealt with these issues when we were student leaders. He said he has been involved with civil rights issues for the entirety of his adult life. He said this is too important to take our eyes off the ball. He said the answer to your question is a resolute yes, we could have been here, and we could have been here sooner.

Councilor Devine said nothing precludes the thorough due diligence they would go through before making a recommendation; this Council would make the appointment and it's not reserved for a member. She understands what they are asking for. She said Council shouldn't reserve a spot for a particular organization at the dismissal of any other organization that may feel that they equally have as much at stake. She said Council takes recommendations all the time.

Councilor Davis asked if the Alliance would be in charge of communications to their network or communications in addition to what the City would do through our public information and our public safety unit headed by the Chief.

Bishop Eric Davis said Dr. Johnson is over the entire state for the Church of God in Christ and he has the power to disseminate to every minister in the COGIC denomination at one time. He said this umbrella organization comprises numerous organizations and it is an ally to what you are trying to do. He said it wouldn't be wise to tell that large group of people that had advocated that we may not have representation on the board. He said contrary to what you are saying, there is a possibility that our nominee may not get selected. He asked how they can disseminate information back to them if they do not have someone at the table.

Councilor Davis said he has told interested individuals to submit their applications. He suggested that they continue to dialog about this; he doesn't want to take a vote given the importance of the issue; this organization feels they have an equal partnership in this. He said we have precedence on how we make selections to committees. He said if there is room for a compromise other than the designation, he'd rather deal with that.

Dr. Alonzo Johnson asked if there is precedence on any board that the City has for this kind of deference to any interest or community group, at any level.

Councilor Devine said spots are designated on the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Design Development Review Commission for a particular profession; not a particular group. She said to have the ability to work together is better than saying that if you don't have this you are going to make sure all of your churches know that we are not supportive. She said if you make a recommendation of five (5) or six (6) people, one will likely be appointed.

Dr. Alonzo Johnson surmised that Ms. Devine's position is that she wants the Alliance to feel free to make a recommendation and you might or might not consider the person(s). He said we want to offer you a person and you reserve the right to object that person.

Mayor Benjamin said Dr. Johnson and Bishop Davis said two different things. He said this Council needs to have the final say on who serves on this council.

Dr. Alonzo Johnson suggested that they tweak the language.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked who Dr. Johnson represents. She requested a list.

Dr. Alonzo Johnson said he represents a denomination; Bishop Davis represents the organization as the chair; and they have various entities that they can share.

Councilor Devine said the motion is that there be an eleventh position that is designated for someone in your organization. She said we would not be able to not appoint somebody who is a member of your organization.

Councilor Runyan expressed concerns about the statement that this takes away the opportunity for other folks who may want to serve on the board; that's fundamentally untrue. He said this adds a seat; it doesn't take away a seat; the numerical statistical probability of anybody who was going to apply yesterday will be the same tomorrow if this motion passes. He said it recognizes the role this organization played in bringing this to fruition; it allows us to be sensitive to the realities on the ground in the community; and it allows us to keep a situation under control if there is one. He said it takes advantage of infrastructure that is already in place. He said nothing precludes this Council from adding additional seats if it benefited the community to bring an entity to the table in a memorialized seat. He said we have other organizations that essentially nominate their own members for their boards and commissions and we just approve them. He said we don't give up our ability to approve anyone; by virtue of them nominating someone for a seat we still have the final authority.

Mayor Benjamin asked Mr. Runyan what Council would have final authority on.

Councilor Runyan said to approve or not approve. He said if a Council member has a concern that this person may present a problem for the body or may be a rebel rouser on the body, it still gives this Council the ability to say no, you need to give us someone who is going to play better in the sandbox. He said it gives Council the ability to protect the atmosphere of the advisory committee that has been set up and it gives us the final authority in whether or not that person would or would not be approved. He asked that Council vote on this today. He appreciates what these gentlemen and members of their Coalition have done in bringing this to the City and raising this issue up. He is thankful for what they are doing for this community and what they are doing in the community and he hopes that we don't miss the opportunity to keep them formally engaged in this process on an ongoing basis.

Dr. Henry Cleare said they were in a similar situation before where former Mayor Coble gave them a seat on a board, but it wasn't memorialized and today it has been forgotten. He said we would like to have you appoint an individual that is in relationship with us as a Coalition. He said if we come together we can get an individual appointed that can sit in the midst of what's being said and what's going on and come back to inform the board. He said we have the ears of people that you don't have the ears of; we can move quicker. He told Chief Holbrook that they could move faster than him. He said if given the opportunity to put someone on the board simply to know what's going on in the inside they can keep things under control and they can stop a lot of things from going on. He said he is hearing all manner of things going on in here. He asked what the problem is.

Bishop Eric Davis said they represent all of the elders of the African American Episcopal districts; the entire Pentecostal Assemblies both worldwide and statewide are on board with us; Church of God in Christ statewide is on board with us; the three Baptist moderators are onboard with the largest being the Gethsemane Baptist Association; interdenominational, we have comprised 100,000 people by virtue of their leaders who have brought their organizations into this Alliance. He said we convene the leaders and the leaders take the information back to their distinctive groups. He said there are few churches that are not a part of this Alliance; however, the Alliance is called together by virtue of an issue. He said if a delegate from one of those organizations was put on the board, they don't necessarily convey back to the Alliance, they convey it back to their root organization. He said we need one individual that brings it back to the collective Alliance.

Mayor Benjamin said he knows that the NAACP is not supportive of this move. He said he has talked to some pastors. He anticipates by nature of this organization that there will be several pastors represented on there and he hopes they are pastors who have a relationship with the Alliance. He said it comes back to the very essential issue; it's not a question of supplanting a seat that might be occupied by someone else, it is very much about this Council having full responsibility for who serves and whether or not this type of council is a success or not; that's something that would be a significant mistake to relinquish. He said Mr. Runyan has the prerogative to have his motion heard. He admitted that he would be less than honest with himself if he didn't tell Bishop Davis and Dr. Cleare that their conversations surrounding the issue with the Human Rights Ordinance gave him pause. He said some of the discussions that we had surrounding the concerns, rights and protections offered to all of our citizens including those who may be gay, lesbian or transgender and the very clear position advocated by several members of the Alliance give me significant concern to give any seat on the board to the Alliance. He clarified that advocating for the discrimination of any of our citizens is a major issue for him and it's something that he cannot and will not support. He said it gives him concern that if a particular crime were committed against one of our citizens who may happen to be a member of the LGBT community would that crime be given the same amount of consideration and gravity. He believes that this council that will help the Police Department and its community relations needs to be one that reports to this Council and this Council only.

Dr. Henry Cleare inquired about the written qualifications for those to be elected to this board. He said that the Mayor is speculating that people on this Alliance will come against those who are LGBT.

Bishop Eric Davis told Mayor Benjamin that he made a strong point and conflated some things that he personally takes offense to. He said the Mayor brought another issue into this issue; we have the capacity to parse out those issues and we have the ability to stay focused on the issue at hand. He said this was the primary issue that the Alliance was convened around; we were distracted by the timing of the other issue, because four days after we met you were about to vote on the issue and it forced all of us to address that issue. He said as soon as that issue was set aside, the Alliance came back to the primary issue, which is this. He told the Mayor that he takes offense that he would take issue with the members of the Alliance. He said he understands LGBT issues and they are advocating for anyone that has a sexual preference. He differs with the statement that gay is the new black. He stated that gay is gay; black is black. He said we are talking about issues of discrimination and what's happening right now in our country. He said gay people aren't being shot down in urban communities; they are African Americans and we are talking about African American churches who are trying to help the City in the event that an issue comes up; we do not want what happened in Ferguson.

Mayor Benjamin told Bishop Davis and Dr. Cleare that he was offended in the various conversations they had on the issue before us. He said it serves as a significant inhibitor for people who are seriously concerned about issues of justice and equity in this community.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Ms. Plough, to add an eleventh seat to the Columbia Police Department Citizen Advisory Committee that would be memorialized for the Carolina Christian Leadership Alliance, failed by a three (3) to four (4) vote. Voting aye were Ms. Plough, Mr. Runyan and Mr. Baddourah. Voting nay were Mr. Davis, Ms. Devine, Mr. Newman and Mayor Benjamin.

Councilor Davis recommended that they continue to dialog on this.

Mayor Benjamin said he has been dialoging with several pastors of various churches and the largest churches in this City who have also made it clear that they are not members of the Alliance.

Bishop Eric Davis reiterated that when the elders join they bring their organization; each individual church has a right not to participate, but the leadership brings the organization into the collective. He said individual pastors have a right to not be a part of the Alliance, but that does not preclude the organization. He added that there are fifty-six churches in the Gethsemane Association, the moderator Rev. Algerron Williams brought the organization by virtue of his leadership. He said once that presiding leader signs on; they are part of our organization.

Councilor Devine added that just because they are a member organization that doesn't mean that they agree that there has to be a position on this board.

Bishop Eric Davis said the group unanimously voted for a memorialized seat and now they will go back to them and let them decide what they are going to do from this point and there will be a decision made as it relates to that.

Councilor Devine noted that she spoke with individuals who didn't have a position on the matter.

6. Efficiency Opportunities Related to the Operation and Maintenance of Water and Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Systems Public-Private Partnership Request for Expression of Interest [Review Committee Report](#) – Ms. Ryan Nevius and Ms. Jannie Nelson, Members of the Review Committee

Ms. Ryan Nevius, Member of the Review Committee thanked staff for a wonderful presentation on the current programs in the water department and the projects associated with the Clean Water 2020 Program. She said there was a great deal of discussion and deliberation along with a review of the REFI responses. She said the committee appreciated Council seeking citizen input and protecting the public trust in our natural resources of our water system. She reported that all of the committee members and staff agreed that there were no ideas presented that were not represented in the amazing array of programs that our staff has overtaken. On behalf of the Review Committee she recommended that City Council vote to approve their recommendation to not move forward with a Request for Proposals (RFP), but to allow staff to continue on their very productive road.

Mayor Benjamin thanked the members of the Review Committee for their work. He acknowledged that this review required a great amount of time and detail and it was good to have a diverse group of eyes on it. He said the ultimate conclusion that our staff is going in the right direction is an endorsement of what we have going on.

7. [Greene Street Closure Request](#) – Mr. Derrick Huggins, Vice President for Facilities & Transportation and Mr. Jerry Brewer, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support for the University of South Carolina

Mayor Benjamin recommended approval of the request. He said the nature of Greene Street as a thruway has changed dramatically and the forward thinking that the University has put into place over the last decade is something we fully support and endorse.

Councilor Davis inquired about the responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Chris Wuchenich, Chief of Police for the University of South Carolina explained that the University's emergency management personnel have discussed this with the Columbia Fire Department. He said there is a standard key that's part of the knox box system and all of the fire trucks have that key.



Councilor Baddourah said the couple of neighborhoods that surround the Russell House and the Greene Street closure have been in contact with University officials and they are all on board with the request. He is glad they went through the due diligence and came up with a good solution for emergency vehicles and to satisfy the needs of the neighbors.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that state law requires us to deed that portion of the road to the University.

Mr. Derek Gruner, LEED AP, AIA, NCARB, Architect for the University of South Carolina said the University is open to that and will go through the required steps to acquire the land.

Councilor Davis asked if that includes full responsibility for the street.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the maintenance and other requirements will go along with that.

Councilor Baddourah asked if they intend to plant trees in the middle of the street.

Mr. Derek Gruner, LEED AP, AIA, NCARB, Architect for the University of South Carolina said no.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to approve the request from the University of South Carolina to close Greene Street between Sumter Street and Pickens Street to normal vehicular traffic at all times.

8. [2015 Summer Youth Initiatives](#) – Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department – *This item was deferred to June 16, 2015.*
9. [Local Preference Policy Recommendations](#) – Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities – *This item was deferred to June 16, 2015.*
10. Proposed Local Hiring Policy – Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations – *This item was deferred to June 16, 2015.*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 4:31 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 11 through 15** as outlined. Mr. Newman, Ms. Plough and Mr. Davis were not present for the vote.

- **Mr. Runyan left the Executive Session at 5:11 p.m.**

11. Discussion of the employment of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
12. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
13. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
14. Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
15. Receipt of legal advice relating to a pending, potential or threatened claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk